

Colloquium October 17, 2025
Andrew Pau (Oberlin College & Conservatory)

Title: "Expanded Continuations in Belle Époque Instrumental Music"

Abstract:

This presentation examines expanded phrase forms in instrumental music from the French Belle Époque (1871–1914), focusing on the expansion of continuation and cadential functions in sentences and hybrid phrases. The first half of the presentation is devoted to the piano music of Gabriel Fauré. In his Fourth and Sixth Nocturnes, Second and Fifth Barcarolles, and Theme and Variations, Fauré juxtaposes regular eight-measure phrases with expanded versions of the same material. In addition to prolonging the temporal span of the phrases, these expanded continuations open up registral space by using sequences and linear passages that often adapt conventional schemata discussed by Robert Gjerdingen (2021) and Gilad Rabinovitch (2023). In later works such as the Fourth Impromptu and the Tenth Barcarolle, by contrast, Fauré's phrases achieve a greatly expanded continuation function at the expense of a greatly diminished cadential function, to the point where the phrases can be described as "contracadential," following David Huron's (2006) description of Richard Wagner's music.

The second half of the presentation examines similar phrase structures in the works of composers such as Ernest Chausson, César Franck, and Maurice Ravel. Recent theoretical scholarship on *fin de siècle* French music and Wagner's influence thereon has focused mostly on harmony rather than form. In examining the characteristic use of expanded continuation phrases in the music of Fauré and others, I aim to build on Matt BaileyShea's (2002/2003) work on Wagner's sentences and open a new angle of analytical inquiry into the instrumental music of the Belle Époque.

Bio: Andrew Pau is an Associate Professor of Music Theory at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. His research interests include the music of the French Belle Époque, nineteenth-century opera, phrase rhythm and text setting, chromatic harmony, and theories of musical meaning. A more recent interest in teaching and research involves works that navigate the interface between East Asian and Western musical traditions. Andrew's articles have appeared in *Music Theory Spectrum*, *Music Theory Online*, *Theory and Practice* and *Intégral*. He is also a contributor to *Modeling Musical Analysis* (Oxford University Press, 2024) and two forthcoming anthologies: *The Cambridge Companion to French Art Song* (Cambridge University Press, expected November 2025) and *Gabriel Fauré: Influences and Influence* (Boydell and Brewer, expected 2026).